

Transcript ~ The Swan of Eternity and Time

A Podcast by Kirk Gradin

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Saith the Great Law: "In order to become the KNOWER of ALL SELF, thou hast first of SELF to be the knower". To reach the knowledge of that SELF, thou hast to give up Self to Non-Self, Being to Non-Being, and then thou canst repose between the wings of the GREAT BIRD. Aye, sweet is rest between the wings of that which is not born, nor dies, but is the AUM throughout eternal ages.

The Voice of the Silence

In *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P. Blavatsky states that what many scholars of her day referred to as "Symbolism" was in its purest form in antiquity the "Mystery Language"¹ of pre-historic ages. Preserved to this day by the Adepts of every nation, it is universally understood by them because rooted in the sacred Wisdom Science granted to the whole human race at the dawn of its awakening. Esoteric symbolism, she wrote, is a language composed of seven dialects "each referring...to one of the seven mysteries of Nature,"² none of which can be properly understood without mastering all the others, without the purest altruism, complete self-mastery, and the awakening of the highest intuitive faculties. Once understood however, it gives precise expression to *Theosophia*, the 'thread-doctrine,' which like the *sutratman*, "passes through and strings together all the ancient philosophical religious systems...reconciles and explains them all."³ Akin to what Shakespeare called "books in the running brooks and sermons in stones", it is revealed by degrees to the mystic who through Buddhi Yoga begins to reunite with what Emerson called the "Over-Soul" and the collective wisdom of all souls. Graced by this language, wrote Robert Crosbie, we would need no interpreter, for we would speak in tongues of fire, touching and elevating every being of whatever nation, kingdom or kind.

What are the seven dialects Theosophia is meant to reveal? In *The Secret Doctrine*, HPB lists them this way: 1. The Spiritual; 2. The Theogonic; 3. Creative Humanity; 4. The Anthropological; 5. Psychic; 6. Astronomical; and 7. The Physiological.⁴ These interpretations were so cleverly veiled and combined, she wrote, that "many were those who, while arriving at the discovery of one meaning, were baffled in understanding the significance of the others... The highest, the first

¹ *The Secret Doctrine*, i, 309

² *Ibid*, i,, 310

³ *Ibid*, i, 610

⁴ *Ibid*, i, 363

and the fourth — theogony in relation to anthropogony — were almost impossible to fathom.” Yet, in her writings she gives at least three key avenues of approach to this Mystery Language: 1. The Mythological: i.e., comparative religion and the Wisdom Religion, which she emphasizes, ultimately requires a *guru*; 2. The Natural: the study nature in all her aspects, visible and invisible, whose deeper mysteries are only revealed through the awakening of perceptive faculties mostly latent in human beings; and 3. Geometry: the 5th Divine Science, used by Adepts to pass divine insights from one generation to another. In approaching an esoteric study of the swan, the student is invited to begin incorporating all three.

All know of Mount Everest as the tallest peak on earth, almost 5.5 miles high as measured from sea level. The last 2,000 feet of elevation gain occurs in what mountaineers call the “death zone” where there is insufficient oxygen for the human body to function for extended periods. In 1953 Hillary and Norgay, made the first ever successful summit and on the semi-final leg of their climb, they were assisted by George Lowe, a New Zealand mountaineer who claimed to have seen bar-headed geese (*Anser Indicus*) sailing over the summit. At the time, this was more than a mile higher than any other known bird had flown. Only in the last fifty years, with use of radio transmitters and satellites, researchers have verified the twice-yearly migrations of this remarkable species. Bar-headed geese have now been documented as ascending in unbroken flight from sea level to heights over 23,000 feet in just a single seven-hour nighttime period to arrive at nesting grounds amidst the pristine lakes of the Himalayan plateau. Despite decades of careful research scientists still do not entirely understand how the physiology of these birds allows them to do so. In Sanskrit the word *hamsa* can mean swan or goose. In both Hindu & Buddhist sacred literature and folk-tales, the term is sometimes used for both. In one of the most iconic myths of the *Ramayana*, seven rishis took the form of the *hamsa* in order to descend from Heaven onto Himalayan lakes to visit the locale where the Vedas were written. Later, these same rishis in the form of birds further descend to the lowest Gangetic plains at critical junctures to guide and instruct humanity. In this sense, modern science has now confirmed one aspect of what the Seers who composed the Indian epics suggested.

Both geese and swans as well as other water birds (such as the ibis with the ancient Egyptians, the pelican with the Rosicrucians, the albatross and many others) were, in traditional cultures, revered and protected as divine guardians. They were associated with the adept instructors of the sacred Mysteries, a symbol of wisdom, loyalty, moral purity, and spiritual authority as well as the seven-fold cosmos, both in and outside of time. Swans and geese are also deeply connected with the mystic and sacred capacities of sound and speech, the meaning of the word swan being from an Indo-European root meaning “to sing or to sound.”

In Christian symbolism, although the dove is often emphasized, with the early Christians and Celts, the goose was revered as a herald of the Holy Spirit, the 3rd aspect of the Christian Trinity. According to historical accounts, sometime in the early 4th century, a flock of geese by their loud cackling on a particular evening, warned the early Romans of an impending attack upon their city. Like the Holy Spirit, in John's Gospel, geese were compared to the wind that "blows where it wills...you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes..." (John 3:8).

And in ancient Greek mythology the swan was sacred to the god Apollo, the deity of Light and Truth, wisdom and knowledge as well as music, prophecy and healing. Large flocks of swans were believed to inhabit the rivers of Hyperborea where they circled Apollo's sacred shrine singing hymns.

One of the principle assertions of sacred mythical traditions both east and west is that the highest reality, whether called God, Parabrahm or the Buddha nature, pervades both humanity and all of visible & invisible nature, including all the kingdoms both above and below the human. The One Life and those who have realized it, are omnipresent. This is one of the central meanings behind the Tibetan mandala. If we had the divine eye of the true Seer, we would know that each living being, each creature as every atom in space is a fractal mirroring, a microcosm of that same whole. **16)** When considered in both its spiritual essence and visible physical form, the smallest microscopic amoeba, to the ephemeral snowflake, to the human constitution, to the solar system, are mirrors of the whole kosmos. As Above, So Below is the well-known ancient axiom.

At a beginning level, for example, the three-fold division of cosmic and karmic law is that of the spiritual or monadic, the mental, and the physical. These are analogous to the elements of air, water and earth. Aquatic birds such as the swan and the goose, synthesize all three. Like the hidden architecture of the cosmos and like the wakeful Bodhisattva, the *hamsa* gracefully and powerfully bridges and transcends the seeming polarities. This is one of the central themes of The Gupta Vidya in moving towards an all-embracing idea of the triple fields of karma in relation to each of the seven principles in human nature.

To acquire skill in action, the logic of the programme of evolution must first be seen in terms of its triadic nature, and then applied, with moral discrimination, according to the laws of analogy and correspondence, within each of the seven kingdoms of Nature. Through *tapas* and ascetic striving, guided by devotion to the Mahatmas and rooted in a vision of the Bodhisattvic ideal, each pilgrim-soul can discover and unlock the mysteries hidden within the microcosmic world of the visible and largely invisible

vestures... Acquisition of a dialectical understanding of the operation of Karma, in its triple operation in the spiritual, intellectual and physical fields, arises from an awareness of eternity in time which yields that timeliness in conduct spoken of by Krishna as renunciation in action and by Buddha as skillful means.

Shri Raghavan Iyer

This bridging of eternity and time is the untapped potentiality of Kumaras and Dhyanis, the higher manasic faculty in every human being, capable of bridging heaven and earth on behalf of all beings, synthesizing the highest spiritual realization of unity, the Om, with the AUM, with self-conscious knowledge of every plane—mirroring the universal mind with loving and joyous involvement in the most material and differentiated planes of embodied existence.

The dual participation in time and timelessness is potently represented by the mastery of winged flight, by the migratory patterns and graceful form, of both geese and swans. Flight itself is symbolic of spiritual freedom, of higher forms of noetic vision and transcendent consciousness. In ancient Russian mythology, the deity called *Tangri Kara Kan* is a pure white goose, perpetually in flight and lord of the three realms of air, water and land.

In the West, it is flocks of Tundra swans who make a twice yearly 4,000 mile round trip from the east and west coasts of North America (including California) into remote regions of the Arctic for nesting, giving birth, and raising their young. Flying in V formation and repeatedly exchanging the lead position, they are known to migrate at heights of over 20,000 feet. Besides being a symbol of the awakened mind's capacity to self-consciously and voluntarily participate in collective rebirth, many aspects of such trips display symphonic group effort, incredible stamina and a highly refined harmonic attunement to the rhythms, cycles and signals of nature. With some species, it has been proven that the young do not know where and how to migrate, but are led and learn only from elders. Recent studies also suggest that such birds possess visual capacities far beyond those found in humans, extending at least into electromagnetic fields. By contrast, for six weeks out of each year while molting, swans along with all other water birds, are flightless. During the molting period, all its flight feathers are shed and regrown, another symbol of yearly death and rebirth, self-renewal and self-regeneration.

We know of more than one modern student of Theosophy whose seemingly chance encounter with an aquatic bird was accompanied by deeply instructive insight or synchronicity. In my own case, it was a very large seagull who appeared at the right moment and precipitated an unexpected and startling confirmation of the Teaching. I had been a student of Theosophy for over 25 years and fortunate enough to have studied *The Secret Doctrine* under the tutelage of Shri Raghavan Iyer. A year after his passing, I had taken a two day silent retreat immersed in study

and meditation on the Stanzas and Commentaries of Volume 1. I was living in a second floor apartment at the time and in the early afternoon stepped out onto the balcony for a breath of fresh air just as an unusually large seagull swooped overhead. Its wingspan was at least as wide as my arm's length and it passed so close, that if I had reached out my arm and jumped, I could have touched it. All I saw was a single motion of the birds wings. But in that brief moment, the entire cosmological teaching appeared instantaneously represented. I cannot explain it, but it was as though every sinew, bone, feather and fiber of the bird was an essential element giving unified and exact expression to the Manvantaric motion of involution and evolution, the periodical sacrificial descent and ascent, exhalation and inhalation of the Great cosmic Breath.

As you heard me discuss last week, in Mahayana Buddhism, the entrance to the path is achieved through awakening *bodhichitta*, the seed of altruism residing in every human heart. In chapter six of *Entering the Middle Way*, Chandrakirti, a 7th c. Buddhist master residing at Nalanda, described the swan as a symbol of the *Bodhisattva*, as one who synthesizes the timebound and the timeless aspects of *bodhichitta*, of universal love and compassion:

*And like the king of swans, ahead of lesser birds they soar,
On broad white wings of relative and ultimate bodhichitta fully spread.
And on the strength of virtue's mighty wind they fly
To gain the far and supreme shore, the oceanic qualities of Victory.*

Here the image of the swan's winged flight synthesizes the essence of the Mahayana path. At beginning stages, altruism is still relational. Even while caught in the ignorance of duality and of linear time, the aspirant nonetheless strives and aspires for the spiritual wisdom embodied in living Buddhas, longing for that insight capable of truly aiding and relieving the suffering of humanity. As self-knowledge grows and the paramitas are progressively embodied, the duality of self and other falls away. The present moment merges with eternal past and future. According to ancient sutras and the poetry of *Mahasiddhas*, even the seeming duality of nirvana and samsara, heaven and hell are transcended. Glimpsed along the way and fully realized at the culmination, there is only the one SELF whose very essence is that of universal compassion, the law of laws. This is what is known in Mahayana Buddhism as ultimate *bodhichitta*. It is why Tsong-Kha-Pa, wrote that "only compassion is critical at the beginning, the middle and the end" of the path. Just as a mother unconditionally cares for her children, seeing to their every need, so does the Bodhisattva care for, serve and protect all beings.

All birds are, of course, egg born. A potent natural symbol of creative fecundity and hidden magical potency, HPB called it "the mystery of mysteries":

The Egg was incorporated as a sacred sign in the cosmogony of every people on the Earth, and was revered both on account of its form and its inner mystery. From the earliest mental conceptions of man, it was known as that which represented most successfully the origin and secret of being. The gradual development of the imperceptible germ within the closed shell; the inward working, without any apparent outward interference of force, which from a latent nothing produced an active something, needing nought save heat; and which, having gradually evolved into a concrete, living creature, broke its shell, appearing to the outward senses of all a self-generated, and self-created being — must have been a standing miracle from the beginning.

The Secret Doctrine, i, 359

In the oldest Vedas of the Hindu tradition, the white *hamsa* is famously depicted as the vahan or vehicle of *Brahmā*, who is the force of all cosmic birth and creativity. Also known as *Hiranyagarbha*, Brahma represents the cosmic golden egg or womb from which all else arises. In the Puranas, this cosmic womb is depicted as containing seven layers or *lokas*. There are versions of the Gayatri *mantram* where all seven are addressed.

An immaculate white swan asleep on the water in an egg-like shape, with its long neck curled up upon its back and its head near the tail, reminds us also of the *ouroboros*, a serpent swallowing its own tail⁵, a symbol of the law of eternal periodicity, and karma in which the end is rooted in the beginning, the effect in the cause. This brings us to a consideration of the Second Fundamental of *The Secret Doctrine*, the law of cycles. Just as night follows day, sleeping by waking, death by rebirth, everything in nature is governed by the same law of periodic unfoldment and rest. At the cosmic level in Hindu Philosophy they are referred to as the Days and Nights of Brahma, as Manvantara and Pralaya. This is represented in the familiar Yin-Yang symbol of Taoism and by the famed series of Swan paintings by Hilma af Klint. Klint was a Swedish artist and mystic whose paintings are considered among the first major abstract works in Western art history, inspired by Theosophy and her devotion to Masters. Most appropriately to our theme today, is this sample of the Swan series depictions where the naturalistic form is replaced by revolving cubes.

⁵ “In the Kabala...the creative Force “makes...spiral lines of his creation in the shape of a Serpent.” It “holds its tail in its mouth,” because it is the symbol of endless eternity and of cyclic periods. Its meanings, however, would require a volume...” *The Secret Doctrine*, ii, 505.

In esoteric sacred geometry, the cube is a rich and multi-dimensional symbol of sevenfold cosmic and human nature, the center point plus the six faces yielding seven. Klint may have been familiar with the references in *The Voice* (p. 6) and other mystic texts such as the Nadabindu Upanishads, where both the white swan "in time" and the black swan "out of time" are described as seven-fold. At one level, it affirms what Krishna states in the *Gita*, that what is night to us is day to the sage. What is invisible or unmanifest and therefore seems like a blank to us, is to the seer rich and resplendent in manifold life. Based on ancient Hindu astronomical calendars traced to Adepts of earlier races, the total period of a *Maha-Manvantara*, the whole of cosmic manifestation, is given as 311.04 trillion years. This is composed of what are referred to as 7 eternities or eons, though in fact they are immense but limited periods. These are symmetrically matched by the 7 eternities of the *Maha-Pralaya*, equally immense periods of non-manifestation or non-being. Even while the cosmos is in a quiescent state of rest, the mystic seven marks this "division of the indivisible". HPB affirms that in this condition of non-manifestation we are far closer to Truth and Reality than in the seeming states of differentiated life we mistake for reality.

The black swan, is of course, not only a symbol of the seven eternities or subdivisions of non-being, but a living creature, native to Tasmania and Australia, whose red beak and white flight feathers make it one of the most visually striking and symbolically rich species of hamsa known to us. It is also the bird depicted on their national flag. Prior to my recent speaking tour through Eastern Australia, I was asked to propose themes for talks, workshops and retreats. Without knowing anything about the city name or locale, I selected "The Swan of Eternity and Time" for the TS Lodge of the Sunshine Coast. I did not find out until traveling with my new Australian friends in the car from Brisbane, that the Lodge was located in Maroochydore, a term from indigenous Kabi meaning "the place of the black swan." This was the first signal from invisible nature that we had chosen an appropriate theme for the occasion. The second came after the presentation. A student from Brisbane recommended the local surf club for dinner. Unknown to her, the club building has a huge black swan logo painted above the entrance, as well as black swan insignias on the menus and shirts of the waiters and waitresses. There are no coincidences.

Not only the swan, but every bird may be seen as an interlaced triangle: the head and two feet forming one triangle, the two wings and tail forming the second. In flight, the tail works like a rudder for steering and for slowing or stopping. With the heart as the center point, we have a geometry similar to the Theosophical Seal, which Master KH also called the squaring of the circle.

When the dawn of manifestation arises, says the S.D., through the boundless fohatic compassion of Kamadeva, seven laya centers emerge from formless latency to active potency.

These seven essences are the mysterious AH-HI, the highest Dhyanis or Lords of Light, who as the collective “aggregate of Divine Intelligence” and following the plan laid out in the Divine Mind, become the emanating agents of karmic and cosmic law and of all forms of force, matter and consciousness in the evolutionary cycle. Just as the one white light in passing through a triadic prism becomes the 7 fold spectrum and ultimately the infinite variety of colors and shades in the visible universe, so are these 7 rays of the universal sun, the means by which the timeless enters time, by which the One becomes Many. Every manifested thing mirrors this archetypal “seven-ing” we are told, and all key cycles are governed by the same fractal pattern.

The Great Bird of Life is the primordial and sacred bridge between *kala* and *khandakala*, the unconditionally Timeless and conditioned Time. The Ineffable Light hidden in Divine Darkness in boundless space becomes, in the dawn of differentiation, the rainbow bridge which displays the one colourless Light of the Spiritual Sun in its beatific dance with seven veils, suggesting the seven primordial rays in splendid unison as the *fons et origo* of the dazzling and incalculable multiplicity of manifestation.⁶

In the Secret Doctrine each great period of planetary manifestation is composed of 7 Rounds, each Round composed of 7 Races and each Race of 7 Sub-Races. Each Round as each Race corresponds to one of the Dhyanis as well as to one of seven sacred planets of our solar system. And each also corresponds to the 7 days of the week. How many of us have appreciated and gratefully meditated upon that? Each day of the week, going back to classical Greece and the ancient Hindu astronomers, corresponds to one of our spiritual progenitors. Astronomically, we could also point to the 28 day lunar cycle in which there is a waxing and waning divisible by 7. The tides, countless circadian rhythms and psycho-mental cycles are governed and effected by this cycle and learning to work and live in harmony with it was tantamount to many ancient cultures. In addition, each human incarnation, from conception to death, is governed by cycles of 7 years. It is not until age 7, for example, that manas, the human soul, has taken hold of the child thus making the individual a responsible agent. In traditional cultures each 7 years brings new initiations, new responsibilities and rites of passage.

With the child, it is the teeth that appear in the seventh month and he sheds them at seven years; at twice seven puberty begins, at three times seven all our mental and vital powers are developed, at four times seven he is in his full strength, at five times seven his passions are most developed, etc., etc. Thus for the Earth. It is now in its middle age,

⁶ *The Gupta Vidya II, ‘Kalahansa and Kalachakra’* by R.N. Iyer, p.397

yet very little wiser for it. The *Tetragrammaton*, the four-lettered sacred name of the Deity, can be resolved on Earth only by becoming Septenary through the manifest triangle proceeding from the concealed *Tetraktis*. Therefore, the number seven has to be adopted on this plane. As written in the Kabala "The greater Holy Assembly" v. 1161: — "For assuredly there is no stability in those six, save (what they derive) from *the seventh*. For *all things depend from the seventh*."

S.D., ii, 312-13 fn

Might the seven-fold swan then, be a symbol of our innate capacity to maintain conscious spiritual purpose, unity with all and our commitment to serve the whole, through every cycle of differentiation and periodicity?

In the late 1800's, H. P. Blavatsky explained that the three-fold division of human nature found in Raja Yoga, the four-fold found in Vedanta philosophy and the five-fold found in many Buddhist systems, are all rooted in the esoteric seven of the Trans-Himalayan system shown on the far right of the chart. This is one of the reasons, she explains in *The Secret Doctrine* and in *Isis Unveiled*, why the numbers seven plays such a prominent role in all the archaic Mystery Schools; in systems of theogony, cosmology and mythology. If used as a basis for study she wrote, it will reveal a common substrate between many traditions and a means by which we can best apprehend the ancient axiom that every microcosm, no matter how small, mirrors the universal macrocosm. It will also provide an archetypal foundation for the sciences of the future in which there will be a synthesis of mystic philosophy, cosmology and human psychology. It will radically shift the way we view all life and human purpose, awakening a greater clarity and understanding of sleep and after-death states and the comprehensive logic of reincarnation. In time, it will enable us to determine at each point of our daily experience which of the seven principles, or combination of them, is operative, opening doors of perception and spiritual service we never thought possible.

"For all human beings in the present period of evolution, spiritual growth consists in awakening noetic awareness of formless spiritual essences, a process of Manasic maturation which requires precise apprehension of the different sets of Dhyanis and ancestors involved in the complex karmic heredity of humanity."

Raghavan Iyer

The immortal higher triad is our innate Buddha nature or inner God. It is the innately compassionate spiritual and moral genius within each of us and a boundless reservoir of all knowledge, peace and bliss, of creativity, love and wisdom. The lower quaternary or square is that which composes the human personality or ego, what the Buddhists call the *skandas*, the

periodical and ever-changing vestures, the temporary actor on the stage of earthly life. Broadly speaking, the aim of human evolution is for manas to so purify itself and transmute the vestures of incarnation, that the square becomes a perpetual servant and ambassador of the triad, for the lunar to reflect the solar. When the incarnated human being mirrors the god-like wisdom and compassion of its divine parent on earth, it dispenses what the ancients called soma, the elixir of eternity in the corridors of time. This is what the Bodhisattva and the Master of Wisdom does, and the science leading to that capacity is the path of *Theosophia*.

The highest point of the spiritual triad overbrooding every soul corresponds to the seventh principle of human nature called Atma, a word meaning 'self' or 'spirit'. But this is not the personal "I" or self that most of us refer to. It is rather, the impersonal, Universal Spirit, omnipresent and boundless, One with the Self of All. Jesus called it the "Father in secret", the Buddhists call it Shunyata, the Hindus Brahman or Parabrahm. When fully self-consciously awakened in a few Upanishads it is *Paramahansa*, the Swan beyond both Being and Non-Being. This links up with the division of the term *hansa* into two words: *Aham* and *sa*. *Aham* is "I am" or "thou art" and *sa*, means "That". "Thou art THAT" being one of the quintessential teachings of the Upanishads, the Unknowable, the Unfathomable, the Inexhaustible and the Inexpressible in eternal Duration where there is no past or future.

In this alone is contained the universal mystery, the doctrine of the identity of man's essence with god-essence, for him who understands the language of wisdom..."

The Secret Doctrine, i 78

No matter how depraved or ignorant of the fact, each of us returns to that primal boundless spiritual Self each night during deep, dreamless sleep providing true nourishment and regeneration to the soul, without which it could not go on. 55) Because of this primeval source of all, the triad, the three-in-one, called Atma-Buddhi-Manas, is in fact and reality one with the cosmic AUM that resounds throughout eternities (mentioned in the opening reading), the fundamental divine vibration ceaselessly nourishing, awakening, uplifting and regenerating the whole of life.

At each incarnation, we are told, higher manas emits a ray which descends into the four-fold earthly vestures, animating a given personality acquired under karmic law. When it does so, manas becomes a responsible agent and dual. It is our capacity to think, discriminate and choose. From it, the way goes up or down. This is both the great gift and the great challenge. As the *Voice of the Silence* states, the Mind is both the knower of the Real and the great slayer of the Real. Because the higher triad is that which unites us with the highest purposes and forces in all of nature, self-conscious awakening cannot occur except on behalf of all, in order to benefit all. This

is why from the beginning, the effort must be to renounce all selfish or self-seeking goals and aims in favor of altruism and universal brotherhood.

Much misunderstood in most new age speculation, the *Hamsa Upanishad* also links the 7-fold swan to the seven psycho-spiritual centers of the human constitution, from the *Muladhara* at the base of the spine to the *Brahmarandra* at the top of the head. This is reinforced by the fact that the Mute Swan and some geese species have a basal knob on top of the beak between the two eyes correlating to the pineal gland in the human skull. In eastern traditions, it is called the Ajna, the Eye of Shiva or the Eye of Dangma, the awakening of which brings true spiritual vision penetrating all the illusory veils of visible nature. In the Upanishads, the pineal chakra also stands for “the capacity to bring the threefold AUM into the realm of time”. It is that which purifies and transforms all actions into the bliss of amrita, true spiritual nourishment and sustenance for all beings. In Eastern mythical traditions, the swan was depicted as having the capacity to extract pure milk even when mixed with water.

At its highest level, AUM is the Soundless Sound which becomes the medium of transmission for the Ineffable Light. The AUM is also the origin of sound in the world of manifestation, the most sacred syllable, the hierophantic leader of all prayers and chants, and the most important subject of all meditation“...it may be seen in two ways. As a single letter uttered with one articulation, it is the OM, the symbol of the Supreme Spirit. One should imagine this as a constant, omnipresent sounding, capable of being consciously sounded within the consecrated temple of the human form. One should imagine it superimposed on all other sounds, all other vibrations, all other thoughts and feelings. To do so is to cooperate consciously with the great cosmic sounding of the One Resonance, but within the sphere and temple of one's own invisible vestures... “...Celebration of the OM is the central thread of the spiritual path and of the quintessential hermetic current. Celebration of hymns of praise to the OM is the axis around which the entire work of the Great Lodge of Mahatmas turns, and it is a celebration on behalf of and among intrepid individuals who are willing to become men and women of meditation, consciously very aware of what the highest level of OM represents...The OM is the highest that one can conceive...the true Self...the supreme resource behind the whole of manifestation and THAT which is beyond manifestation itself.

Shri Raghavan Iyer

In the *Hamsa Upanishad*, we find a short discourse between the Hindu sage *Gautama* and his guru, *Sanatkumara*, “the eternal youth” and “knower of all *dharmas*”, who offers a distillation of Vedic wisdom. Here, the unfoldment of knowledge of the bird known as *Hamsa* is given as the

allegorical equivalent of the unfoldment of spiritual Self-knowledge, also referred to as *Brahma-Vidya*, the spiritual sun, “more resplendent than tens of millions of suns and by whom all this world is pervaded.”

Kirk Gradin

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